

Expanding Education in the Public Interest

OACS Public Policy Statement #5

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We believe the following to be deeply relevant for the achievement of equitable school choice in Ontario:

1. the existence of a thriving independent school sector is a demonstrable public good in a liberal democratic society;
2. six other Canadian provinces fund their private school sector, in whole or in part, as part of regular government education grants to private schools, with no negative consequences for their public school systems;
3. the continued discrimination by the Government of Ontario against selective faith-based schools has been condemned by the United Nations as a human rights violation;
4. the parameters of a fair-funding policy for faith-based schools should be:
 - a. selection of teaching staff shall be made by the governing authority of the private school, in accordance with applicable legal requirements;
 - b. the curriculum shall be determined according to the school's published philosophy of education and shall be consistent with basic Ministry requirements;
 - c. the admission policies of the school shall be based on consent to the school's published programs;
 - d. accountability for student learning standards shall be to the Ministry of Education through designated and recognized service organizations;
5. the proper balance of the principles of public accountability and educational integrity are best exemplified in the British Columbia funding model as identified in its *1977 Independent School Act*.

We strongly recommend that the officials responsible for the formation of new government policies for Ontario seriously consider the recommendations of the 1985 *Report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario*. The majority of the 61 recommendations in the Report should be implemented forthwith.